

Capitol Region Council of Governments

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DATE: MARCH 12, 2007
TO: CHAIRMEN AND MEMBERS OF TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE
FROM: LYLE WRAY, PHD, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, CAPITOL REGION COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS
SUBJECT: SUPPORT FOR HOUSE BILL NO. 7094, AN ACT CONCERNING TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENTS

The Capitol Region Council of Governments is the regional planning organization serving the City of Hartford and the 28 surrounding towns. The Council of Governments wants to express its support for House Bill No. 7094, An Act Concerning Transportation Improvements.

Bill 7094 would continue the major transportation and transit investments initiated in the transportation acts passed by the General Assembly in 2005 and 2006. Those initiatives were critical to restoring and improving our state's transportation systems and we must continue those efforts. Bill 7094 adds several new initiatives to those of the last two years. The Council of Governments is particularly supportive of the additional emphasis given to Transit Oriented Development (TOD).

CRCOG legislative priorities for 2007 include strong support for establishing a balanced, multi-modal vision with a strong emphasis on Transit Oriented Development. TOD is a complicated, yet critical process that requires well-structured support and incentives for municipalities. CRCOG strongly recommends that to support these initiatives, strong partnerships be formed between Regional Planning Organizations and municipalities around funding TOD.

CRCOG further recommends that transportation dollars be targeted to 3 to 6 transit oriented development corridor projects that can be granted through a competitive process by the state to Regional Planning Organizations partnering with towns. To be successful, TOD will need incentives for moving ahead and funding to support detailed design, land assembly, and joint development agreement preparation.

CRCOG is also supportive of the additional emphasis in H.B. 7094 on the bicycle. CRCOG remains strongly supportive of biking as an alternative to driving and as a recreational sport for environmental and public health benefits. We therefore support the overall enhancement of trails, pathways and access throughout the region to make biking a more feasible alternative and activity. CRCOG recommends more funding for initiatives related to this mode of transportation.

Overall, both Transit Oriented Developments and Bicycle Initiatives will help the state to grow in a smart, efficient manner to preserve the quality of life that Connecticut has enjoyed for centuries.

Thank you to the Committee for the opportunity to present written testimony.